



*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

**School/Department/Division:** Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing (SON)  
**Planning Coordinator:** Lauren Groves, Assistant Dean

**Area(s) of Focus:**

Based on the SON's results in the staff supplement section of the University's 2007 Faculty and Staff Opinion Survey, the category "Resources and Efficiency" was selected as the primary area of improvement. School of Nursing staff members are located on two separate campuses, the Lake Shore Campus and the Medical Center Campus, and due to the distance between campuses, there is little opportunity to gather as a group, which makes working efficiently as a team a difficult feat. In addition, staff members were interested in developing skills beyond the technical.

**What We Did:**

Knowing that the University had recently rolled out a new training program entitled, EMERGE, I researched the courses and contacted Jorene Richards in Human Resources and we discussed what workshop might best suit the SON's needs. In the end, we decided on "Crucial Conversations," a course designed to train individuals to deal with difficult situations by resolving the issue through open dialogue. Jorene was able to condense the two-day workshop into one day, and Dean Mary Walker was very supportive of the staff's participation in the workshop. On the selected date, SON staff from the Medical Center Campus visited the Lake Shore Campus to participate in the training.

**Results:**

Though attending the workshop was voluntary, 85 percent of the full-time staff attended, and the day was a huge success. Staff comments and evaluations were very positive, and the workshop allowed our staff to get to know one another better, while also providing the necessary tools for us to deal with communications issues, which our staff freely admits they have from time to time. Staff not only received insight into the communication patterns of others, but into their own communication behavior as well. In the end, the workshop made a huge difference to our team, and I've even witnessed some of our staff using their "crucial conversations" techniques first-hand.